

National Transportation Safety Board  
Washington, DC 20594

Brief of Accident

Adopted 09/11/1992

CHI90MA244 File No. 2123	08/27/1990	ELKHORN, WI	Aircraft Reg No. N16933	Time (Local): 01:00 CDT		
Make/Model:	BELL / 206B			Fatal	Serious	Minor/None
Engine Make/Model:	ALLISON / 250-C20B		Crew	1	0	0
Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed		Pass	4	0	0
Number of Engines:	1					
Operating Certificate(s):	On-demand Air Taxi					
Name of Carrier:	OMNIFLIGHT HELICOPTERS					
Type of Flight Operation:	Non-scheduled; Domestic; Passenger Only					
Reg. Flight Conducted Under:	Part 135: Air Taxi & Commuter					
Last Depart. Point: Same as Accident/Incident Location			Condition of Light: Night/Dark			
Destination: CHICAGO , IL			Weather Info Src: Witness			
Airport Proximity: Off Airport/Airstrip			Basic Weather:			
			Lowest Ceiling: 0 Ft. AGL, Unknown			
			Visibility: .00 SM			
			Wind Dir/Speed:			
			Temperature (°C): Unk/Nr			
			Precip/Obscuration: None / Ground Fog			
Pilot-in-Command	Age: 42	Flight Time (Hours)				
Certificate(s)/Rating(s)	Total All Aircraft: 5043					
Flight Instructor; Commercial; Single-engine Land; Helicopter	Last 90 Days: 264					
Instrument Ratings	Total Make/Model: 1540					
Airplane	Total Instrument Time: 132					

FOUR HELICOPTERS WERE BEING USED AT NIGHT TO TRANSPORT A CONCERT GROUP FROM A GOLF COURSE AREA NEAR ELKHORN, WI, TO CHICAGO, IL. AS THE THIRD HELICOPTER (N16933) WAS DEPARTING, IT REMAINED AT A LOWER ALTITUDE THAN THE OTHERS, AND THE PILOT TURNED SOUTHEASTERLY TOWARD RISING TERRAIN. SUBSEQUENTLY, THE HELICOPTER CRASHED ON HILLY TERRAIN ABOUT 3/5 MI FROM THE TAKEOFF POINT. ELEVATION OF THE CRASH SITE WAS ABOUT 100 FT ABOVE THE GOLF COURSE AND 50 FT BELOW THE SUMMIT OF THE HILL. NO PREIMPACT PART FAILURE OR MALFUNCTION WAS FOUND DURING THE INVESTIGATION. PILOTS OF THE OTHER HELICOPTERS REPORTED VFR FLIGHT CONDITIONS WITH SOME FOG. A GROUND WITNESS NEAR THE CRASH SITE REPORTED HAZE AND GROUND FOG OF VARYING INTENSITY WITH PATCHES OF LOW CLOUDS, BUT SAID STARS COULD BE SEEN THROUGH THE FOG.

Brief of Accident (Continued)

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Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER  
Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - INITIAL CLIMB

Findings

1. (C) PLANNING/DECISION - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - DARK NIGHT
3. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - FOG
4. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - HAZE/SMOKE
5. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - RISING
6. (C) PROPER ALTITUDE - NOT ATTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
7. (F) VISUAL/AURAL PERCEPTION - PILOT IN COMMAND

Findings Legend: (C) = Cause, (F) = Factor

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The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident as follows.

IMPROPER PLANNING/DECISION BY THE PILOT, AND HIS FAILURE TO ATTAIN ADEQUATE ALTITUDE BEFORE FLYING OVER RISING TERRAIN AT NIGHT. FACTORS RELATED TO THE ACCIDENT WERE: DARKNESS, FOG, HAZE, RISING TERRAIN, AND THE LACK OF VISUAL CUES THAT WERE AVAILABLE TO THE PILOT.